

you £2, what would you like to buy with it?" etc.,—seemed gradually to break the force of what threatened to become a serious habit.

Fear of ridicule by some gentlemen friends once brought a powerful influence to bear, inducing her one evening, of her own accord, to endure being left alone upstairs for a considerable time, and this conscious victory, followed by change of air and scene, did much to help a cure which we hope will prove permanent.

BABY SAYINGS.

THESE few instances of "Baby Talk" may interest some who are baby-lovers like myself.

A little girl (two years old), having heard *Little Arthur's History of England* read to her two brothers, was sitting on the floor one morning playing with her dolls. She was heard to remark: "Now, dollies, 'Once upon a time the Danes came to '—'" (saying the name of the place she lived in).

On another occasion, when out in a boat for the first time, she seemed to think the bay was a big bath, for she said: "Mother, where is the tap?"

Once, while having breakfast, her mother said: "Look, Baby, at the horses enjoying their breakfast of grass." The child looked up and said: "Not grass—frame-food, I hope."

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING.

(Continued.)

APPARENTLY, everything that can be said upon this topic has been said already, judging by the amount of little text-books, guides to teachers, etc., that may be met with in every Church Extension sale room; and, certainly, as far as careful expounding of the Scripture and its moral application goes, there is enough literature extant to suffice for many generations of Sunday School comers. But of late years there has arisen among teachers a feeling of instability and

failure, which these books, little or big, wise or foolish, do not seem able to overcome.

There appears, too, to be practical reason for such a condition of mind. We will suppose that we have before us a class of ten children—a good average number—the ages of which range from 8 to 12 years. They are intelligent, but not clever or original; some perhaps, to increase the difficulty, are inclined to be flippant. The lesson is upon the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, a story well known to both teacher and pupil.

Now, there is no new way of telling an old story, and if there were, in this particular case, nothing could excel the beauty of the simple Bible narrative. It is a fact, however, that the children are already so familiar with it that it will fall quite unheeded upon their ears. If the teacher be specially gifted with voice and manner, she may retain their attention for a few moments, but it will be directed to her personally rather than to the words she says. She closes her Bible, and after a few questions, begins the usual moral application.

This story admits of more than one, and the sympathy and compassion which it teaches might be appreciated by even smaller children. In a class of ordinary town children, however, those especially who belong to the poorer classes, such a moral, however brightly and briefly it may be applied, will scarcely interest them in the least. They will listen as if they had heard it all before and were tired of it, and they will make no effort to attend. The teacher is putting forth her brightest and best, and the children, apparently, are dumb spectators of her struggles.

At the end of the lesson, when she calls upon them to help in the summing up, there are only one or two interested enough to help. Away they go out into the sunshine or the snow, whichever it be, and the lesson is gone—blown clean away by the winds with the hot schoolroom air.

Such lessons, no doubt, helped to make righteous men and women in the days gone by, but "times are changed." Though it has been found necessary to adopt different educational methods in the week-day school, the Sunday School goes on for ever on the beaten track.

Other lessons children teach themselves by practical illustrations prepared and introduced at the right time by the teacher; but the circumstances connected with Sunday teaching usually prohibit black-board work; and unless Bible illustrations are of the best, it is better not to use them at all. Therefore, we must be content to look elsewhere for a remedy. The imagination must be reached

through the senses; and ordinary methods of illustration, through pictures, etc., are in many cases not possible; but when we think again of a modern secular lesson, we find that the secret of gaining attention is to work from the *known to the unknown*. Some circumstance of the child's life is the starting point, and, with or without the aid of the teacher, he finds the bridge which connects his little world to that vast one beyond. It is this bridge which is lacking in so many Bible lessons. That which should be linked with every detail of every day, is, to the child, something different and apart. He fails to realize what he cannot reach through some outer sense. Nothing that he hears in the Sunday School appears to have anything to do with the grass under his feet, his meals, his clothes, his lessons, his play. It is true that these things are often spoken of in the application of the lesson, but that is not sufficient to make children learn to see for themselves that every stick and stone and blade of grass and change of sky are indications of the actual Presence of God working day and night. In some way, with the aid of the Bible and Nature, this should be made to them a living idea so that letter by letter they may read and grasp a little of the greatness and the love of God.

The teacher influences by the tone of her voice and by the expression of her face. The tone of the voice of God and the expression of His mind are only seen in the world as He made it. We read *what* He says in the Bible. *How* He says it we only know from Nature. No other lesson is taught to the child through its moral sense alone. Eyes, ears, touch, are all brought in to help in History, Geography, Mathematics. Moral truths alone, the wonderful beauty of the character of God, are left to be grasped as thin air in a vague shadowy way, by the dim imaginings of a child's mind.

It is important that the Prayer-book be intelligently explained and understood; it is necessary that the Bible be a familiar, even the *most* familiar, Book, and in Sunday School teaching these things are the first to be remembered. A fresh Nature lesson, however, introduced at some time when the children seem weary, will open for them wide fields of interest between the Bible and their own lives, and will make them realize the back-ground of the Bible pictures better than any colouring drawn from the imagination of the teacher.

The following is the sketch of a very imperfect lesson on the "Pine," which I should not venture to put down here if it had not several times proved successful in arousing the interest of a class of small village boys. Students of the House of Education will recognize the form of an every-day lesson and understand that the

children are, as far as possible, taught to teach themselves. The book which I have found most useful in compiling these lessons is the *Bible in Nature*.

SUBJECT - TREES.

THE PINE.

Illustration. — A piece of pine or a picture of pine-trees, or both.

- Step I. What does the Bible say about trees? "The trees of the Lord are full of sap."—Ps. civ., 16.
Whose trees are they? "God's."
What are they full of? "Sap."
Explain the meaning—how sap rises in the Spring—difference between trees full of sap and trees with little or none.
- II. Why did God plant trees?
Read "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the fir-tree, and the pine and the box-tree together that they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord hath done this and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."
Here is one of God's reasons for planting the trees. What is it?
- III. Have you thought that God planted trees that they might tell us about Him?
What does the pine tell us?
- IV. Where does it grow best? In cold parts.
Why should anything have to grow there? Beauty needed as well as in warm parts.
Where skies are grey and winds are bleak, there is the pine found.
- V. What soil suits it best? That found on mountain sides—poor and scanty.
- VI. Does it need sun? Very little indeed.
Why? Because God made it so that it could live in wild, cold, lonely spots where other trees would die.
Does it need much soil? No.
Need cultivation? No.
- VII. It hurts and destroys nothing.
What does it show? The *kindness* of the Holy Spirit which has created it on purpose to cover the desolate places of the earth.
- VIII. Has it work to do?

Try to think of its uses.

- (a) To beautify ugly places.
- (b) The cold tops of pine touched by clouds.
When a cloud touches something cold, rain falls.
Therefore pines are the cause of many rainfalls.
When pine forests are cut down the springs and rivulets
have been known to dry up.
Palestine is a parched land for this reason.
Old Chinese proverb: "The mightiest rivers are cradled in
the leaves of the pine."
- (c) Third use.
Will fruit ripen on north wall? No; too cold.
Will it on the opposite side of the wall? Yes; the wall
protects it.
In pine countries the people build their houses and gardens
on the side of the forest, away from the wind, and thus
are sheltered.
- (d) Fourth use.
Great lumps of ice and snow sometimes slip from the tops
of mountains and would fall upon the villages below if
the pines did not act as a barrier. When the people are
foolish enough to cut down the trees the snow falls on
their villages and destroys them.

IX. Repeat these four uses of the pine.

What then does God tell us of Himself, by these trees?

That He is wise; that He is kind and pitiful; that He
makes things useful by simple and natural means.

X. Next time we will see how He has fitted the pine for the
work that it does.

F. RANKIN.

A SUMMER VISIT TO THE NEW ZEALAND BUSH.

IT was in November, 1892, that we reached New Zealand, and there we had our first experience of Bush life.

After a day or two spent in Wellington we crossed Cook Strait in lovely calm weather—a very rare occurrence—and towards evening entered the Pelorus Sound in the South Island. There we pursued a tortuous course, winding and twisting round promontories, into bays, through narrow straits, and across wide lagoons, the steep hillsides being covered from summit to base with dense forest. Occasionally there are clearings where the settlers have felled and burnt down the luxuriant growth, and the slopes and downs were covered with sheep. Here and there, near a good stream, might be seen a squatter's wooden house, but these were few and far between, from four to six miles or more. Those only who live on the shore of the Sound are enlivened by a sight of the passing boats and schooners, and the visit of the fortnightly steamer calling for delivery of mails is the greatest excitement in life. The post offices occur at intervals of nine or ten miles or more, and all who want letters must pull that distance in a boat on the chance of receiving one. If too busy to fetch our mail fortnightly we were often a month or two without intercourse with the outer world; in this way we often mistook the day and date of the month. Then we would get an enormous and welcome budget of home news and illustrated papers, the pictures of which are generally used to ornament the walls. One hut I saw was entirely papered with the daily newspapers, and on the top of this coloured pictures and photographs were pasted and hung for ornament.

It was quite dark when we arrived at our destination, so much so, indeed that we expected our vessel to ground every moment, as the mountains seemed closing in upon us. In the darkness a faint light was just visible and, in answer to the steamer's whistle, a house door was thrown open and the light flashed out. After the excitement and bustle of our arrival we found ourselves in a comfortable, simply-furnished kitchen, partaking of a very English tea